

We claim:

1. A rope-fastening device comprising:

(a) a first and a second locking ring, each locking ring comprising:

a base;

a stationary arcuate arm extending from said base, said stationary arcuate arm having a locking end and a pivot end;

a moveable arcuate arm having a locking end and a pivot end connected to the pivot end of said stationary arm at a pivot point;

an opening in the locking end of said stationary arm suitable for receiving the locking end of the moveable arm; and

a plurality of gripping members along the inner surface of said moveable arm or said stationary arm; and

(b) a flexible connector linking the base of said first locking ring with the base of said second locking ring.

2. The device of claim 1 comprising a pawl-and-ratchet mechanism comprising a pawl disposed at the locking end of said stationary arm adapted to engage the locking end of said moveable arm when said moveable arm is inserted into the locking end of said stationary arm.

3. The device of claim 2 comprising a release lever connected to said pawl, wherein pressing said release lever disengages said pawl from the locking end of said moveable arm.

4. The device of claim 3 comprising a locking mechanism operably connected to said release lever, wherein locking said locking mechanism prevents said release lever from disengaging said pawl from the locking end of said moveable arm.

5. The device of claim 2 comprising a key release mechanism connected to said pawl comprising a key and keyhole, wherein rotating said key in said keyhole disengages said pawl from the locking end of said moveable arm.

6. The device of claim 2 comprising a plurality of ratchet teeth along the outer surface of the locking end of said moveable arm.

7. The device of claim 2 comprising a plurality of ratchet slots along the outer surface of the locking end of said moveable arm.

8. The device of claim 2 comprising at least one locking ring closed around a mooring line, wherein the size of said locking ring is adjustable by moving the locking end of said moveable arm deeper into said opening of the locking end of said stationary arm.

9. The device of claim 8 wherein said pawl-and-ratchet mechanism permits movement of said moveable arm into said opening but prevents said moveable arm from being retracted from said opening.

10. The device of claim 1 wherein said gripping members comprise a plurality of teeth or spikes.

11. The device of claim 1 wherein said locking rings are constructed from metal.

12. The device of claim 1 wherein said locking rings are constructed from metal and said flexible connector is constructed from a material having tensile strength equal to or greater than rope.

13. A mooring system for docking a watercraft comprising one or more mooring lines and the device of claim 1 suitable for tightly closing around said mooring lines.

14. The mooring system of claim 13 wherein said one or more mooring lines have diameters ranging from about  $\frac{1}{4}$  of an inch to about 2 inches.

15. A boat comprising at least one cleat, at least one mooring line attached to said cleat, and the device of claim 1 suitable for tightly closing around said mooring line.

16. A method of docking a watercraft using the device of claim 1 comprising the steps:

securing the first end of a mooring line to a watercraft;

wrapping the docking end of said mooring line around a docking object;

tightly closing the first locking ring around the free end of said mooring line; and

tightly closing the second locking ring around the standard part of said mooring line.

17. The method of claim 12 further comprising releasing the watercraft from the docking object by releasing a locking ring from said mooring line and unwrapping said mooring line from around said docking object.